

The Scriptures tell us that God (1) created the world by His Word, (2) He continues to sustain it by that same Word, and that (3) this Word is His only begotten Son:

*"By **the word of the Lord** were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.... For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." (Psalm 33:6, 9)*

*"In the beginning was **the Word**, and **the Word** was with God, and **the Word** was God. The same was in the beginning with God. **All things were made by him**; and without him was not any thing made that was made. ... and **the Word** was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." (John 1:1-3, 14)*

*"... (Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For **by him were all things created**, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and **by him all things consist.**" (Colossians 1:15-17)*

Since all things "consist" by the Son of God, it means that without the constant working of His power there would be a total chaos. **Everything in the world is sustained by the power of God in His Word – our Lord Jesus Christ.** But there is one thing that can unsettle the order sustained by this power, and that thing is sin:

*"And he said, What hast thou (Cain) done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; When thou tillest the ground, **it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength**; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth." (Genesis 4:10-12)*

*"The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. **The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof**; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore **hath the curse devoured the earth**, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left." (Isaiah 24:4-6)*

Notice that the curse which came from Cain's murdering of his brother included inanimate nature. The reason for this was because Adam, as the head (having dominion) of the earthly creation, was in a divine pattern relation with nature:

*"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and **let them have dominion** over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and **over all the earth**, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." (Genesis 1:26)*

After Adam had fallen, the earth and everything in it started reflecting his rebellion against God. This explains the phenomena of animal rapacity and poisonous weed vegetation:

*"And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: **cursed is the ground for thy sake**; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; **Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee**; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field." (Genesis 3:17, 18)*

In the divine pattern, the earth and everything upon it is a mirror of man. God did this so that man would be able to look at occurrences in nature and recognize that something was wrong in his relationship with God and righteousness due to sin. Chaos in nature was a manifestation of chaos in the psyche of man, done so that man would have a visual aid to help him recognize there was a problem, and then repent (similar to pain in our body, when we hurt we know something is wrong). If man was in harmony with God, the earth would also reflect that in bringing forth good fruit. This is why, when the nations surrounding Israel insisted on remaining in their idolatry, they received the following reflection of their own rebellion back from the earth they were living upon:

*"And **the land is defiled**: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and **the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants**... That **the land spue** not you out also, when ye defile it, as **it spued** out the nations that were before you." (Leviticus 18:25, 28)*

Therefore from the days of Adam's fall the earth reflects Adam's character of rebellion toward God through the influence of his new master, Satan. If it hadn't been for God's grace through Christ, Satan would have destroyed all his subjects. Satan takes advantage of people only when they become agents of his philosophy — sin. Thus during the time before the flood, he delighted that humanity reflected his character. People so much coalesced to and confirmed themselves in their sins, that this would lead to withdrawal of God's sustaining power in Christ throughout the world:

"And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." (Genesis 6:3)

The people before the flood were rejecting God's merciful invitation through Noah and were rebutting the pleading Spirit of Christ. At this rapid pace of going deeper into wickedness, God foretold that after 120 years the people would completely crucify Christ in themselves and thus the sustaining power of God in Christ would be removed/crucified and the earth would be allowed to fully manifest the character of their fall:

*"For this they willingly are ignorant of, that **by the word of God** the heavens were of old, and the earth **standing out of the water** and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, **by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.**" (2 Peter 3:5-7)*

The people before the flood did not recognize that the power of Christ was that which rallied the elements of the world. They thought that the processes of nature were sustained by an inherent power contained in nature itself and therefore Noah's warning for the coming flood seemed irrational to them. However, the Scripture tells us that the power which sustains everything is Christ – the living Word of God. Here Peter shows that **the same process that led to a flood of water will also lead to the fiery flood after the millennium, and as the former was caused by the crucifixion of the living Word of God, so the latter will be caused by a similar process.** The hearts of men were completely hardened in their total rejection of the pleading of Christ; their final response to His Spirit was to lash out to kill it. *"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins ... when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing ..."* (1 Pet. 3:18-20). The eviction (drowning out) of the Spirit of God through the people's sins that lived before the flood, was the reason for that flood:

*"Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden? Which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood: Which said unto God, **Depart from us**: and what can the Almighty do for them?" Job 22:15-17*

The earth itself was stained with the immorality and violence of men, and therefore God saw that in its final phase the earth would express man's rebellion. The earth reacted no

differently than its sinful inhabitants by retaliating against its enemies, as it naturally "vomith out her inhabitants" and destroyed them. This is why Jesus in the days of His earthly life said to the multitude:

*"And if any man hear my words, and believe not, **I judge him not**: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: **the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.**" (John 12:47, 48)*

Spiritual darkness is the state in which sinners become so much one with the philosophy of sin that they are no longer able to behold and perceive the light from the character of God. In every case where Jesus speaks about this place/condition, the judgment is mediated through someone else: the "tormentors" (Matt. 18:34,35) or "servants", "will bind them" and "throw them" (Matt. 22:13), which confirms the idea that God is not the direct executioner of the death sentence; this is done by their own sins before the face of His glorious and loving presence.

God's judgment, therefore, is permitting man to judge, condemn and destroy themselves:

*"**Evil shall slay the wicked**: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate." (Psalms 34:21)*

*"The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but **the wicked fall by his own wickedness**. The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them: **but transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness.**" (Proverbs 11:5, 6)*

*"Behold, he (the wicked) travaileth (is pregnant) with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood. He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made. **His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealings shall come down upon his own pate (head).**" (Psalms 7:14-16)*

*"The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken. The LORD is known by the judgment which he executeth: **the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands.**" (Psalms 9:15, 16)*

*"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap. **For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption**; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (Galatians 6:7, 8)*

For many people the description of the fiery judgment after the millennium is the final irrefutable proof that God directly kills people:

"... and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." (Revelation 20:7-9)

The greatest contradiction in an interpretation which presents God as the direct executor of the wicked in the lake of fire is the life of Jesus Christ.

Christ came to fully reveal the character of His Father and when we look at His life on the earth, we can surely know what God is like: *"... he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father..." (John 14:9).*

When Christ was here on the earth, He killed no one. Whatever event is described in Revelation 20, it cannot be in contradiction to the revelation which the Son of God gave of His Father while He was on the earth. Having this in mind we will examine the factors that contribute to the events in Revelation 20:7-9, as they are explained throughout the Bible.

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~ Isaiah 24:4-6 ~